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Submitted by:
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In SUPPORT of: HB #6435—AAC Election Day Registration; SB #917—AAC The Training Of Registrars Of Voters; HB #5375 AAC Early Voting and Absentee Ballots

Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone, and Members of the Committee. We submit the following testimony in support of HB #6435—AAC Election Day Registration, SB #917—AAC the Training of Registrars of Voters, and HB #5375 AAC Early Voting and Absentee Ballots

HB #6435: As members of the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut, we support implementing Election Day Registration in CT but suggest amending this bill. We believe that implementation may require flexibility in order for it to work in all communities. First, for security and voter convenience, we suggest allowing the registrars to designate a location for both voter registration and for casting a ballot, rather than requiring voters to make an extra trip to the polls to vote. Second, we favor allowing towns to take a few days to research the voter's application before counting the ballot—using a procedure similar to processing Provisional Ballots.

Research shows that implementing EDR can be done without major costs to municipalities: in EDR states, the estimated costs range from \$0-\$250 per precinct. EDR also reduces the need for Presidential Ballots in Connecticut and, therefore, may alleviate the need for additional staff in town clerks' offices on Election Day. With EDR, our state may also avoid the wastefulness in printing and completing Provisional Ballots, and then rejecting and discarding them because the voter is not registered. Finally, research shows that EDR states show a consistently higher voter turnout than non-EDR states and report almost no voter fraud.

ROVAC's members believe that Connecticut can work out the details of EDR and welcome the chance to help.

SB #917: All registrars recognize the critical need for establishing a centralized, designated unit within the SOTS office for training and continuing education for both new and experienced registrars. Registrars resign abruptly from office, may not be re-elected, or die in office, leaving new registrars to learn on the job. ROVAC provides an important resource for sharing ideas, attending seminars, and networking for those who participate in its programs. However, there must be a unified, central authority that assures that all registrars receive the regular, systematic training they need to comply with all regulations and offers an experienced, readily available resource in case of emergency situations. We can't afford NOT to do this. Errors in elections administration that result from lack of training can result in costly litigation for municipalities and lack of voter confidence in our elections. We all must provide the best service to our taxpayers by assuring that registrars and all elections workers are well prepared to do their jobs.

HB #5375: We support early voting by absentee ballot to allow more flexibility for voters who cannot be at the polls to vote. "No excuses" absentee voting works well in many states and should be adopted in Connecticut.